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| Location: | The new primary Free School will be located on a c.3 hectare site on a development in the north of Buckinghamshire close to the border with Milton Keynes and is due to open in September 2027 subject to statutory consents and construction market conditions[[1]](#footnote-1).Attached is a masterplan of the development showing where the new primary school will be built.The South West Milton Keynes (SWMK) Development site will eventually total 1855 homes. |
| Context and need for school places | The proposed school will be built as 3fe in size with a 90 place nursery to accommodate demand from the SWMK development although its design will be future proofed to allow for further expansion up to a 4fe school should demand rise further due to new housing. The build will include 2 additional classrooms to allow for potential bulge classes to accommodate pupils from the development during peak growth times, if required. Any Trust bidding to run the school must agree to accepting bulge classes as and when requested by Buckinghamshire Council (BC) to meet the pupil needs from the development.  |
| Phase/Age Range and Capacity | The school that is the subject of this competition is a new one and is not replacing an existing school. The school will be a 3fe primary school (630 places) for age ranges 4years of age to 11 years of age with a 90 place nursery for ages 2-3, catering for mixed education, building up over time to its full capacity.  The school design will be future proofed so that in time, if necessary, it can be expanded up to 4fe (subject to planning) with a 120 place nursery. Core infrastructure may be oversized from the outset to facilitate future expansion.The building will include 2 additional classrooms and additional core facilities to enable the school to admit up to two bulge classes to accommodate pupils from the development during peak growth years in advance of any decision to move forward with a permanent expansion. This will enable the Local Authority to monitor pupil yield rates from the development which in the early stages can be very volatile. |
| Opening date | BC will seek to open the primary school on 1 September 2027. The opening will be subject to statutory consents and construction market conditions. |
| Admission Arrangements | The school will build up over a period to ensure the viability of local schools. Initially the school will open in Sept 2027 with up to 60 children in Reception and 30 into both Years 1 and 2. It is anticipated that the school will then increase its admission number to 90 in Sept 2030. The school will then build up over the following six years to a capacity of 630 primary places and 90 nursery places. All proposers will be expected to follow the Department for Education (DfE) School Admission Code and the School Admission Appeals Code. Proposers will be expected to participate in the BC co-ordinated scheme for admissions and the Council’s in-year admissions procedure.  |
| Special Educational Needs | The school will be expected to be fully inclusive and to educate children with special educational needs and disabilities in line with legislation (Children and Families Act, 2014). |
| Catchment area | The catchment area for the new school will cover all 1855 homes on the SWMK development.However, in time BC may wish to review the catchment area of the new school with the successful sponsor, and the successful sponsor would be expected to be willing to take part in such negotiations. |
| School building and design | The school will be procured and delivered by BC and will then be transferred by BC to the successful sponsor on a 125 year lease. The school will be built to current Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) Standard Specification and in line with DfE Building Bulletin 103 requirements for primary schools. The new school will be a modern design offering high quality facilities for the benefit of the school and the wider SWMK community.When up to capacity, the school will accommodate 630 children and 90 place nursery for pupils aged 2-3.The buildings will be future proofed to expand to 4fe with a 120 place nursery should demand necessitate the provision of additional places. Core areas of the building may be oversized from the outset to minimise disruption with future expansion plans.The design process for the school has yet to commence but may have done so by the time the successful sponsor has been appointed. Bidders will need to confirm that they will accept the building as contractually “practically complete”. BC will not accept any alterations the Trust might seek to make to the design. However, the successful sponsor will be able to be fully involved in the design process and delivery of the school prior to opening.There are various encumbrances affecting the title. Further details of which will be provided following written request. |
| Revenue funding: | A furniture and equipment allocation will be provided by BC in agreement with the successful sponsor or will be provided through the construction contract. |
| Equalities Impact Assessment | BC has carried out an Equalities Impact Assessment and confirms that the new school will not have a negative impact on public or service users and that no groups or local schools will be adversely affected by the new school. |
| Start-up costs | The cost of the school build will be met by BC through S106 funding, HIF and Basic Need.BC will provide a budget, currently £74,700 for start-up costs which would initially be allocated from January 2027 *(subject to opening date agreement*), before the school opens to allow for the recruitment of a Headteacher and then the appointment of appropriate staff.After the opening of the school the diseconomies of scale funding as the school builds its number on roll to capacity will be in line with BC’s agreed growth funding criteria. BC will fund 30 pupils per class in the first year of opening and then 27 for all subsequent years for those classes for a maximum of 3 years.  BC also provides funding of 30 per class for all new reception classes after the first year of opening until all year groups are open, these classes do not have any further guaranteed funding.The successful sponsor might be eligible to apply for DfE Project Development Grant. Details are on the DfE website.After opening the new school’s annual budget allocation will be funded directly by the ESFA. |
| Application process and assessment criteria: | Only applications submitted by the published **deadline of 5pm on 9 June 2023** using the appropriate BC application form will be considered for evaluation.Bidders must ensure that they are on the DfE’s approved sponsor list: any potential bidders, who are not on the approved list, must contact the South East, Regional Director (RD) and arrange to go through the DfE’s approval process. A potential bidder can apply to become an approved sponsor at the same time as submitting an application to sponsor a presumptive free school. You must contact the RD/DfE before submitting a bid to Buckinghamshire Council.All bids received will be evaluated against the criteria set out in the application form and the key criteria set out by the DfE, which are strategic vision, educational capacity and performance, financial planning and operational capacity and governance. A short-list of bidders for interview will be drawn up. Short-listed applicants will then be interviewed by a panel made up of the Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services, DfE representative (if available), Corporate Director Children’s Services, Director of Education, Head of Achievement and Learning, and the elected member for the SWMK development area.After the panel interviews and BC has agreed on its preferred bidder, details of all bids and the Council’s recommended bidder will be sent to the RD. The RD on behalf of the Secretary of State will consider, with the Advisory Board, the Council’s assessments before deciding which bidder is in the best position to take forward the new school. The RD will then inform the LA and the successful bidder of the decision and BC will inform any unsuccessful bidders. |
| Timeline for process | * Invitation to submit a proposal published on 17 04 2023
* Deadline for bids to be received 5pm on Friday 09 06 2023
* LA informs DfE and RD of bids received by 12 06 2023
* Bids evaluated and due diligence undertaken by LA/DfE/RD by 21 07 2023
* Shortlisted bidders for interview will then be notified by LA and invited to panel interviews in September 2023
* Details of all bids received including BCC preferred bidder submitted to DfE in September 2023
* RD makes decision on successful bidder by October/November 2023
* BC will expect the successful Trust to join their project board managing the opening of the school.
* The successful bidder must hold a 6 week consultation as set out in Section 10 of the Academies Act 2010, before the DfE funding agreement can be signed.
* Primary school opens September 2027 (subject to the conditions set out above).
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| Requests for clarification or more information | * Please contact Paula Campbell-Balcombe, Commissioner Schools, School Commissioning, Buckinghamshire Council on 01296 382896 or via: paula.campbell-balcombe@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
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1. The S106 agreement for the SWMK development endeavours to make provision for the primary school at the start of the academic year following occupation of the 350th home (or such later date as may be appropriate) – which based on the current housing trajectory is estimated to be September 2027. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)